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Argentina



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20520

AT 112

Memorandum of Conversation

November 13, 1979

Participants: Marshall Meyer, An American Citizen
Who Heads a Jewish Seminary in Buenos
Aires, Argentina

Patricia M. Derian, Assistant Secretary
for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs,
Department of State.

Rabbi Meyer (protect) and I had talked briefly in
New York and this was an office visit to fill out the
outline of events in Argentina, which he offered last
week.

1. [

NR

2. Kline Bombing: He has been informed that the
"PLO, the Monteneros, and various right wing groups acted
in cooperation in the Kline bombing." This information
came to him from "a Jew working at the level of admiral
on certain special technical problems within the Argentine
Government. The man is a physician." (Protect.)

3. Rabbi Meyer believes that "more trouble is coming;"
(a) Mendez' move toward a coup at the time of the Timerman
release was "just a test-tube case;" Mendez has been pro-
mised by Suarez Mason that he will be in a fine position

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s): NR

Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

(XGDS:PMDerian)

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as they move along. (b) If Videla is challenged, he will simply activate the Chilean conflict and is mobilizing his forces now. The Drake Passage waters are supposed to be "the biggest untapped petroleum reserve in the world (billions of barrels)" and that accounts for the intense determination of Argentina and Chile in the dispute.

(c) The Catholic Church bishops spoke out on behalf of workers because their economic condition is so severe.

(d) New York bankers and others confirm that huge bankruptcies (20-40 million dollars) among leading firms have begun coming into New York banks; the economy is rapidly falling apart.

4. Timerman: The Israeli Government told Timerman they had been informed that if his six articles on his detention were published, Rabbi Marshall Meyer, Mr. Graetz, Timerman's brother and Bob Cox would all be killed.

5. Seminary Bombing: The Israelis have also told Rabbi Meyer that the bomb in the Orthodox seminary (not Rabbi Meyer's seminary) was meant as a warning to Marshall Meyer who is constructing a new elementary school and seminary building to demonstrate that he "has hope for the future. There are 300,000 Argentine Jews who would like to be able to stay in Argentina."

6. EC-9: Sent a letter to Videla, saying that "time is running out on Argentina" and it should move to correct their human rights picture.

7. Anti-semitism is picking up in the labor unions. There was a mimeographed tract distributed in "the thousands and thousands recently."

8. School Catechism: The Vatican and Pope have let it be known that they do not favor forced catechism instruction in the schools; the Argentine church has refused to say anything, however.

9. Safety of Meyer and Cox: Rabbi Meyer is returning to Argentina Friday and said "this might be the last time you see me, so I want you to know that there is only trouble

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in the future for Argentina." He did say that he had been told by a very good source in the Argentine Government that "Bob Cox was at the limit" and "his time was up." The same person assured Rabbi Meyer that he was not in any immediate danger, although Rabbi Meyer takes this with a grain of salt.

10. Israeli Sales of Military Equipment to Argentina: He expressed his "complete disapproval of the practice," said that he had transmitted his views to the Israeli Government at many levels. The Israelis have said that they are being blackmailed into selling arms. He believes, however, that they are "looking desparately for business because of their own economic situation."

11. Disappeared: Rabbi Meyer believes that ninety percent of the Argentines "do not care about the disappeared." They claim they don't know of the existence of the problem and he believes this is true due to the press blackout.

Rabbi Meyer is an American citizen, resident in Buenos Aires for nineteen or twenty years, as head of a theological seminary. He is married and the father of three children. His wife and children are also in Buenos Aires. He is fluent in Spanish, has countless high contacts in the Argentine Government, the religious community (Christian and Jewish), among lawyers, judges, journalists and a broad cross section of the citizenry. He has spoken publicly on many occasions on behalf of the disappeared, the need for restoration of the rule of law and other human rights provisions. He has had a high profile until now, but has been counseled recently to "lie low" through what he and his contacts consider this dangerous and unstable period.

During the visit of the Interamerican Human Rights Commission to Argentina, he spent many hours at his home with Commission members.

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In the past, his information has been reliable. Many people contact him with information, he tries to get corroboration of serious items and apparently works closely with the Israeli Embassy, as well as with our own.

cc: INR/DDR/SAHR - Mr. Fleischer
INR/RAR/SA - Mr. Buchanan
ARA - Mr. Ruser
ARA - Dr. Guzman
HA - Mr. Salmon
HA - Mr. Flood
MA-- Ms. Cohen

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